



Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare
Partners: Amtrak, Caltrans Division of Rail, BNSF Railway Company, Union Pacific Railroad

REPRESENTING COUNTIES ALONG THE SAN JOAQUIN RAIL CORRIDOR

DISCUSSION TOPIC: requested by Mayor Harvey Hall (City of Bakersfield)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=San Joaquin Valley Railroad&printable=yes](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=San_Joaquin_Valley_Railroad&printable=yes)

Oxalis - Mendota - Fresno

This mainline route was formerly known as Southern Pacific's "West Side Line" and at one time extended from Tracy, California and then south through the West side of the San Joaquin Valley (I-5 corridor) via Patterson, Gustine, Newman, Los Banos, Oxalis and then east to Fresno via Ingle and Kerman. California Northern Railroad now operates the northern section of the line from Tracy - Los Banos. SJVR operates the southern section of the line from Oxalis to Fresno and was at one time owned by Port Railroads, Inc. (PRI; also a Kyle subsidiary) and operated by the SJVR. On April 24, 1996 the PRI was merged into the SJVR. Both the PRI and SJVR were already Kyle Railway subsidiaries. The section of track between Los Banos and Oxalis was abandoned by Southern Pacific in 1993 and the tracks were removed soon after.

The Southern Pacific constructed the track from Tracy to Newman (37 miles) and from Los Banos to Armona (near Fresno) in 1891. Southern Pacific's overnight *Owl* passenger train (#57/58) operated over this line between San Francisco and Los Angeles into the 1960s.

In 2008, the Surface Transportation Board approved the abandonment of the section of track between Strathmore and Jovista. This left the communities of Strathmore, Porterville, Terra Bella, Ducor, and Richgrove without any rail service. Tulare County has recently broken off negotiations with the SJVR to purchase this section of track to preserve it for future use and possible reactivation. However, beginning in September 2010, the tracks were being removed by the SJVR and the job was completed with the entire line having been pulled up in mid November. The future of this line is very much in doubt and with the rails having now been removed, it's extremely unlikely that trains will ever traverse that corridor again. The SJVR is also looking to abandon two additional sections: Strathmore to Exeter and Exeter to Dinuba. Due to the low traffic and poor condition of these tracks, eventual abandonment seems likely.